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CHRISTMAS BOOK ISSUE

THE

Commonweal

GEORGES BERNANOS

Anatomy of Evil

by Thomas Molnar

THE SUEZ CRISIS

Oil and Welfare State

by J. L. Benvenisti

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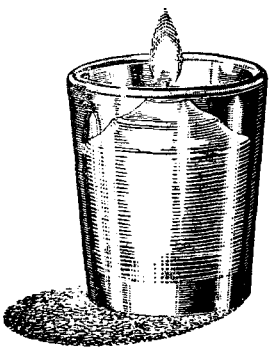

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THIS WEEK

Week by Week 243

Anatomy of Evil
by Thomas Molnar 246

Oil and Welfare State
by J. L. Benvenisti 249

Communications 251

In Praise of Father Murray
by John Cogley 253

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 254

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 255

Critics' Choices for Christmas 257

Books 262

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

COMMUNISM AS A FORCE

THE AMERICAN press has been quick to seize upon certain evidences that at long last Communism is mortally wounded if not already dead as an ideological force in the world. The extent of the popular risings in Poland and Hungary, where the rebel leadership came from the most fully indoctrinated and greatly privileged classes under the Soviet system, seemed to provide the most striking testimony. Here was unmistakable proof, editorial-writers contended, that the most untiring Communist indoctrination simply does not take.

A second hopeful element was the apparent struggle for power among the Russian leaders and between the Kremlin and Tito, Communist China and other Communist countries. Finally, there were the disaffections and desertions of leading Communists from their parties in various lands throughout the free world. Communism appeared to be dwindling as a dynamic, motivating force.

The conclusion was almost inevitable that, as was so ruthlessly demonstrated in Budapest, Communism owes its dominion solely to force of arms. Even if this contention were true, it should not have nurtured American complacency to the extent it has, considering the Kremlin's formidable stockpile of nuclear weapons, with squadrons of long-range planes and pilotless missiles of increasing range—not to mention the world's largest and strongest army and a navy now more powerful than Britain's and second only to that of the United States.

But are there not several important factors which greatly limit the ideological portent of the Hungarian uprising? It was first and foremost a national revolt against a hated foreign overlord. Time and again, correspondents emphasized the prominence with which Hungarian flags were displayed by the demonstrators; the brave red, white and green tricolor was everywhere. But where hatred of a foreign regime is so intense, how could its compulsory official teaching inspire anything but popular revulsion?

Communism as a doctrine labors under a further handicap among the European satellites. Not only is it identified with an overbearing foreign master, but also with the lower living standards brought on by economic subservience to the inferior Soviet Union. For these people it represents a cultural retrogression and also results in a marked decrease in the material necessities of life.

CONSIDERATIONS such as these go far to explain the failure of Communist indoctrination of young students and workers among the European satellites. Disputes among contending leaders in the Communist world and in free countries where the Party operates supply little evidence as to Communism's doctrinal strength. From its very beginnings the movement always had a strong realistic and pragmatic bent. And the tensions among American, British, French and Italian Communists imply not only a certain amount of at least temporary fragmentation but also personal convictions of considerable vehemence.

At this stage of the cold war, therefore, the Hungarian crisis has not signalized the beginning of the end for Communism as a threatening ideological force. In the eyes of the world the Soviet Union has lost some prestige, but far less than it would have if it had not been for the French-British-Israeli attack on Egypt. Communism's counsels are divided. It has lost invaluable party adherents, and especially fellow-travelers in the West. Despite the tragic Hungarian aftermath, its enslaved peoples the world over have taken heart.

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But the recent risings and the fact that students in East Germany, for instance, are resentful both against being forced to study Russian and to study Communism, do not actually mean that Communism has spent its revolutionary force. In spite of everything, it continues to appear as a sort of beacon light to many depressed peoples in the colonial areas of Asia and Africa, in Latin America and even among the West European proletariat. It is still a powerful force which true democracy has to reckon with. It will not simply wither away because we wish it. Deliverance from such a threat to human freedom can hardly be won by lightheartedly enjoying our own political and material blessings, while waiting for Communism and Communists to go away.

HUNGARIAN REFUGEES

THE FREE countries of the world have been able to offer little material assistance to the Hungarian people, who continue their sustained, heroic resistance to Russian tyranny. We had the opportunity to offer asylum to those refugees who fled their homeland in search of freedom, and this we did. Few of the critics of the United States would deny that it can be generous, efficient and imaginative. These were exactly the qualities most needed when we offered to accept Hungarian refugees. And our intentions were, indeed, generous. But between the intentions and the act fell the shadow of official bureaucracy.

Merely to relate the reception given to the first group of refugees is to expose an official approach chilling in its lack of imagination. After a flight of twenty hours the first group of sixty Hungarians was shepherded to a platform where stood Secretary of the Army Wilber M. Brucker. They listened to him attentively, on that cold, windy day. "I want to initiate you. I want you to know what freedom is all about," Mr. Brucker told these representatives of the heroic people of Hungary. "First, I want you to applaud the [American] flag." Then, in language suitable to any board of businessmen, he asked them to applaud in turn those men "responsible for the top-level handling of this great enterprise."

This was followed by the customs procedure, the health and immigration examinations, security clearance, and finger printing and photographing by the Army. It was long before all of the sixty refugees were completely "processed."

This is the best our country has been able to do in spite of continued efforts by those who realize the extent of the problems and who have succeeded in cutting through some of the red tape involved. For our Refugee Relief Act and the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act insure a mound of paper work before our Consulate approves a refugee. In spite of hard work, U.S. officials have been unable to keep up with the proposed schedule.

Yet much of the remaining red tape is surely expendable under the extraordinary pressures. England and France have responded to the urgent request of Austria, where one out of every hundred persons is now an Hungarian refugee, and have offered to accept unlimited numbers of refugees for either permanent or first asylum and have severed all routine immigration procedures.

Yet, for all the traditional generosity, efficiency and imagination of the U.S., we offer to accept a limited number if they complete a multitude of forms and tests and applaud our "great enterprise." One need not underestimate the advantages we offer to the refugees to recognize that it is an honor and an opportunity to receive them into our country. And one can only regret that, as a nation, we have been unequal to either.

END TO ISOLATIONISM?

THESE ARE bad days for isolationists and UN-baiters, especially among Catholics. As we noted last week, the recent statement of the American Bishops was particularly strong in its support of the United Nations, saying that despite failings and falterings the UN "offers the only promise we have for sustained peace in our time." This must have been hard for some editors to swallow, but there it was, and they were stuck with it.

Nor was this all. Like all his recent predecessors, Pope Pius has always stressed the need for an international organization like the United Nations, but in recent weeks his anti-nationalist, anti-isolationist

NEXT WEEK

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN writes of his experiences in Budapest during the uprising.

"Like hundreds of other Westerners, mostly diplomats and journalists, I was caught in the midst of the fighting in Budapest and witnessed the few days of freedom—until it was submerged, but not killed, by a rain of fire and steel. . . ."

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strictures have grown even stronger; Catholic exponents of the go-it-alone school can find little comfort in his remarks. Then, during November the annual convention of the National Council of Catholic Women took place in Chicago. Twenty-seven hundred delegates to the convention, representing more than ten thousand affiliated groups, urged U. S. legislators to remember the moral obligations deriving from justice and charity in considering foreign aid programs; the convention stressed the need for the nations of the world to work together in an international organization for freedom under law. In these proceedings, again, there was no cheer for the isolationists.

On the political front, President Eisenhower is also pursuing a solidly internationalist course and has made reliance upon the UN a key point in our approach to the crises in Hungary and the Middle East. In this he seems to have most of the country solidly behind him; if there is much sentiment for direct intervention by the U. S., it is not visible. Americans of various shades of political opinion are outraged by what has happened in Hungary, but the general feeling appears to be that direct intervention by the United States would only lead to an all-out nuclear war.

Right now, therefore, Americans are turning to the UN, on the theory that there is nowhere else to go. But the danger is that people will expect the UN to do the impossible, to be brave when we hesitate, to be strong when we are weak, to be wise when we are blind, and this would be fatal. The UN cannot solve all problems, and friends of the organization should stress this fact now, lest an inevitable reaction set in when the American people discover it for themselves.

THE LIMITS OF CONTROVERSY

AN ALMOST classic example of minor-league McCarthyism is currently on display in the small town of Briarcliff, New York. The storm centers around a proposed seminar for gifted seniors and their parents at the local high school. The seminar, aimed at developing a greater ease in "abstract thinking," would be financed by the Fund for the Advancement of Education and would use films developed for this purpose by Dr. Mortimer Adler, well known among Catholics for his stimulating interpretations of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The Briarcliff Post of the American Legion scented danger and issued a public statement of opposition to the seminar, because one sponsor of the program is school trustee W. H. Ferry, an official of the Fund for the Republic; because Mortimer Adler is "notorious for his 'one-world' philosophy"; and because a 1954 House of Representatives subcommittee on tax-exempt foundations questioned the propriety of grants made to Dr. Adler.

The unfortunately familiar pattern of irrelevancies, insinuations and irresponsibility is all here. Mortimer Adler is guilty by association with Mr. Ferry, who is guilty by his association with the Fund for the Republic, which the American Legion has found guilty (by association) of being "anti-anti-Communist."

Although invited to do so, the commander of the Briarcliff Post did not see the seminar films in which Dr. Adler appears. They deal with such subjects as beauty, truth, justice, and the existence of God, and do not touch on world government. Further, the extent of Dr. Adler's one-world philosophy is an opinion, voiced some years ago, that in the course of centuries all nations might have to sacrifice some of their sovereignties in a world federation. If Dr. Adler is "notorious" on the subject of world government, it is only because he has made one of the most moderate statements, pro or con, to be recorded.

Moderate or not, the statement has been enough to make Dr. Adler a "controversial" educator, and, in a newspaper interview, Mr. George May, commander of the Briarcliff Post, declared that the schools should not have "controversial" educators address the children. When asked if thinking could be separated from controversy, Mr. May replied: "Maybe we're not ready for it yet in this country."

In Dallas the public library removed two works by Picasso to prevent the possibility of what the librarian called "a lot of controversy." On Long Island a lecture by Henry Steele Commager was canceled because certain groups declared the distinguished historian controversial. Two recent attempts to present "The Male Animal" on TV have failed because sponsors have feared that the sequence in which the letter of Vanzetti is read would make the play controversial. Come to think of it, maybe Mr. May has a point, after all.

Readers who wish to aid the needy in Hungary or in Austrian refugee camps may send their donations to Catholic Relief Services, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N.Y. Contributions for the 60,000 Suez evacuees and war victims may be sent to: Emergency Committee for Relief to Egyptian War Victims, 20 West 40th St., New York 18, N.Y.

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GEORGES BERNANOS

Anatomy of Evil

"THE NOVELS THAT HE WROTE WERE PRODUCED UNDER THE SAME INNER COMPULSION AND STAMPED WITH A RARELY EQUALLED UNITY OF INSPIRATION"

THOMAS MOLNAR

ONE MORNING as he came down from the hills into the city Zarathustra heard "We have killed God! God is dead!" The anguished cry, uttered as a new century was dawning, was, perhaps, not loud enough to awaken the routine-loving and the indolent. Those who had fallen asleep, long before, on the soft pillows of rationalism, groaned once or twice, then turned and continued their dreams, at least until 1914. For some others the Nietzschean quest was to superimpose a veneer of metaphysical despair on their positivistic outlook. And for Catholics it was a reminder that religion which slumbers in bourgeois comfort is often closer to pharisaism than to living faith.

To speak of a tremendous religious revival in France at the turn of the century is no exaggeration. Catholic social action set out, under Marc Sangnier's leadership, to reconquer the working classes; Thomistic studies were revived by Jacques Maritain; Charles Péguy was to connect medieval and modern France in an original synthesis; Bloy, Claudel and Jammes were carving a respectable place for themselves in literature. In 1910 the free-thinker critic, Eugène Montfort, was justified in observing that "the wind seems now favorable to the re-Christianization of the intellectuals."

Georges Bernanos, born in 1888, belongs to the second generation, the one which was to build on terrain already conquered. But his sensibility and his political convictions put him in a class by himself. The idols of his youth, the leaders of the royalist, anti-*Dreyfusard* forces, were men who hated the "stupid nineteenth century" (as Léon Daudet put it), and fought a losing battle against all manifestations of modernism, whether machine-civilization, the dislocation of "peasant and aristocratic" France, or the republican institutions themselves. For better or for worse, Bernanos was never to forget their lesson, namely that France, *le pays réel,* was suffocating under the rule of corrupt profiteers, mad technocrats and sly politicians. In the course of time—and after bitter political experience—he was to castigate yet other categories of Frenchmen. But it is the basic dualism of his outlook, the uncompromising distinction between what he considered good and bad, which underlined all his judgments.

For a man whose every opinion was part of his most intimate being, who considered lack of sincerity, together with indifference and non-commitment, as the greatest scandal, literature was, necessarily, a profession of faith, a substitute for the sacerdotal vocation. Ironically, this monk of the pen had to do most of his earlier writing as a traveling insurance agent, on the spotted tables of small-town coffee-houses. Relatively late, close to his fortieth year, did the writer's fortune smile on him; only after the publication of *Sous le soleil de Satan* was he discovered as the most forceful novelist of his generation. Thus the seven or eight novels that he wrote are the fruit of some ten years, produced under the same inner compulsion and stamped with a rarely equaled unity of inspiration.

After 1938, the growing awareness of France's imminent defeat, then the national humiliation and the Pétain regime, forced him off the novelist's well-trodden path; he resumed his role of social critic and pamphleteer, one he had never really relinquished. Until his death in 1948, from Brazil, from North Africa, at home, he spoke and wrote, indefatigably, about the future destiny of France "among the robots," about technology and its insatiable appetite, about the shrinking world which tolerates neither contradictions nor freedom.

WHAT ARE, then, the characteristic features of Bernanos, the novelist? What kind of fiction did he write, he, the passionate public prosecutor of society, if not repeated illustrations of his theses? Was he a genuine novelist or an intellectual chasing mirages?

The marvelous thing about Bernanos is that he lived so intensely in his inner world, so concentrated on man's existential problems, that he managed to preserve intact within himself the child and the child's freshness. Neither the pedantic, haughty, and abstractions-filled milieu of Maurras, nor the harassing insurance business,

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nor the literary glory, the emigration, the war, the sickness made the slightest dent on his Christian and human armor. He reacted to all, participated in all, finally consumed himself in the heat that his passionate nature generated; yet the inner core, the enthusiasm and the innocence, remained throughout his sixty years the same: in the trenches of Flanders where, oblivious of the war, he devoured Bloy, and in the Brazilian jungle where he became "the bearer of respect for France."

The world of Bernanos' novels reflects his main preoccupation: what is the position of the saint in the midst of a world teeming with the most complicated, the most sophisticated forms of evil? But, first of all, who is a saint? and what is evil? What happens when these two poles of spirituality come into contact? These are the problems that Bernanos pursues in all his works, and in his political writings no less than in his novels. The spiritual man is not a strictly religious apparition: he is, rather, the man with a positive life whose whole being is heavy with the weight of God in him.

He may be a simple peasant, or a public figure, a young girl, or a priest; in each case his life is centered around an Existence that is infinitely higher than his own, and which gently urges him along the road of suffering and sacrifice, leading, ultimately, to Golgotha. To each of these figures may be applied what Albert Béguin wrote: "The destiny of the priest (in Bernanos' novels) is suffering and temporal failure . . . because he is a spiritual being in a world which distrusts spirituality."

But if the life of the spiritual man is derision and defeat, he is also the supremely perplexing obstacle which obstructs the sinner's progression. In old Christian writers sin was surrounded by awe, with a resulting erotic flavor for temptation; for their grandchildren sin became a fascinating aspect of the human adventure, an almost scientific product of a godless age. Sin was, for a Racine, a dramatic step, the forbidden fruit of a slowly maturing strategy, a note of exclamation after a passionate dialogue with God; in Mauriac's and Graham Greene's novels sin is part of a desolate landscape or of an oppressive climate, and the sinner himself a sad and pitiable character who omits from his reckoning the power of grace and its unexpected visits.

Bernanos' sinners are all in a state of advanced corruption. The soul, absorbed in self-contemplation, shrinks continually until it is stripped of all the elements which composed originally its mysterious chemistry. This is a half-conscious process, but the victim turns away wilfully from the spectacle he offers. Even when he no longer can deceive himself, when, panic-stricken, he finds himself in the cold night of unbelief, he does not give up. He tries to bargain: "After all," Abbé Cénabre keeps repeating to himself, "I have lost only God which means that I have lost nothing. I must admit, however, that I had organized my life around this hypothesis . . . God is necessary for my habits, my work, my status as a priest. I shall, therefore, continue acting as if God existed. I must make this choice once and for all."

CÉNABRE, the central character of *L'Imposture,* is a priest and a man of superior intellect. The drama, in his case, erupts with a particular force; his imposture spreads with the speed of an infectious disease, and before us who follow the progress of the poison in his system, he disintegrates spiritually, intellectually, even physically. The book he writes no longer has the qualities that the world used to admire; he becomes listless and negligent, his formerly meticulous neatness yields to a sudden desire for external degradation.

Or take Monsieur de Clergerie, the pedantic historian in *La Joie,* whose sole great ambition is to be elected to the Academy. Does he defy God? By no means. But in the words of the saintly Abbé Chevance, he is "opaque": God is not visible through him. His little manias, his constant complaints about the heat and about his nerves, etc. are innocent only in appearance; in fact, he had let a young wife die of despair at his side, and now prepares to sacrifice a daughter to a second marriage which would promote his election. He surrounds himself with souls as dry as his own, and with vicious servants who thrive in the ambiguous atmosphere of the house. As one of them remarks: "Nobody here has the courage of good or evil."

The same may be said of the count's family in *Journal d'un curé de campagne.* For years the countess had been living in the darkest night of the soul: she had lost a son, and by the morbid attachment to the dead, had alienated the living: her husband chases the servant-girls and governesses, her daughter hates her and plans to kill herself in order to bring scandal and further desolation on the house.

The examples could be multiplied, but the central preoccupation is always the same: the priest as a saint (Donissan in *Sous le soleil de Satan,* the curé d'Am-

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bricourt in *Journal. . .*, Abbé Chevance in *L'Imposture*), then the negative priest, the anti-priest, the whited sepulchre: Cénabre, Monsieur Ouine, Doctor La Pérouse, etc. No other author has treated the figure of the priest in such a deep, yet nuanced manner. As a Balzac of the sacerdotal world, Bernanos explores the priest's life, his inner conflicts and external conditions, his place at the crossroads where the ways of God and men's ways meet.

To the unity of the characters there corresponds, in Bernanos' novels, a certain unity of the topic. The desiccated soul of one man infects the souls and actions of others; sin is a dynamic reality, living a life of its own, eating itself into the tissue of being. It has such an impact that only a saint may force it to a halt, and eventually reverse it. The economy of salvation functions as a well-ordered plan.

God's man makes his presence manifest by the extraordinary *lucidity* he possesses. The young curé of Ambricourt, the Abbé Chevance, or Chantal de Clergerie are people with little experience of the world. They are shy and disarmingly naive, they stumble along the path of everyday routine where even a child would walk unguided. Abbé Chevance, an elderly man, had not even been entrusted with a parish after his awkwardness in the first. The curé in the *Diary of a Country Priest* is an idealistic freshman among the tough and suspicious peasants who obstruct his well-meaning enterprises. And Chantal is but an extremely young girl, exhausted by the tasks of running a household. They know no evil; they could say, with the curé d'Ars, that all they know about sin is what they learned from the lips of sinners.

Yet these three are capable of forcing the most hardened carapace to break and uncover the palpitating soul underneath. Cénabre before Chevance, the psychiatrist La Pérouse in Chantal's presence, the countess cornered by the curé of Ambricourt become like fragile children bathed in a mother's strict but immense charity. In these scenes of confrontation, which are, beyond any doubt, Bernanos' best, the sinner has all the advantages of intelligence, fame, authority. That he yields, step by step, is nothing if not the work of living faith unfurling itself as a victorious flag. Under the reader's eyes an incredible transformation takes place: the young priest or the young girl seem to grow gradually old and weary, as if they were struggling with a tremendous burden, taken off the other's back; but they never weaken. Their purity absorbs the world's wickedness without a trace. They carry out "the saint's duty, the duty for which he was born: the salvation of weak souls."

BERNANOS' portraits show a man in a passionate state of mind, with darkly burning eyes in a face ravaged by indignation and suffering. His existence was marked by whole-hearted commitments, lasting loyalties to what he considered just causes, and unyielding hatred of hypocrisy, baseness, and the avarice of the soul. His distinction between good and evil reaches the most exalted expression in the just-discussed confrontations of saints and sinners; but on other matters, too, his novels are infinitely rich in acute observations and fearless judgments.

In his favorite characters Bernanos saw not only the heroes of spiritual conflicts, but exceptional men in general who, although clumsy and inexperienced, have a deep understanding of the world and its ways. This penetrating mind, however, they do not turn to personal profit; their presence in the world is a constant reminder that despite the crushing weight of modern existence, the right of inner life must be, and can be, preserved. With no trace of smugness, but with a superiority illumined by faith, the curé of Ambricourt and Chantal de Clergerie revolutionize the existence of the people with whom they come into contact, tread across their path with the lightness of angels, but leave behind transformed human beings.

Genuine inner life, earnestly engaged in the spiritual battle whose manifestations he saw everywhere, was for Bernanos the condition of man's survival as the noblest creature of God. "The saints," he said in his *Letter to the Europeans,* "are fellows who . . . would let themselves be made into mincemeat before giving Caesar anything more than his due." The Caesars, at the time he wrote this, were the mad dictators, Communist and Fascist. But he equally feared the other danger to inner life, the world turned into the Technicians' Paradise. "The only sort of inner life that they would allow," he said, "would be a modest form of introspection, directed by the doctor, and tending to produce an optimistic frame of mind." Against the double threat of totalitarian mentality he saw only one defense line, the last but most formidable one: the mind of free men. The whole earth is, after all, like the village of Ambricourt: to set it straight, "heroes are needed whom the world cannot assimilate; for it is better for the world to risk its soul than deny it."

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FROM ENGLAND

Oil and Welfare State

J. L. BENVENISTI

AN IMPORTANT and rather disturbing manifestation of British politics calls for more comment than it has yet received. It is one which the trend of events may for a time obscure, but, unless we are already in the opening stages of World War III, it will certainly re-emerge, and when it does, we may feel that not the least noteworthy feature of the Suez crisis was the startling manner in which it revealed the phenomenon of which I speak.

Until recently, the Tory and Labor Parties have been thought of as reflecting two sets of supposedly conflicting and very specific interests. The Tories were the party of business enterprise, of property and—at least so their enemies not altogether correctly alleged —of profits and privilege. Over against them stood the Labor Party, representing, in theory at any rate, the wage-earners and the underprivileged, real and alleged —in short, the underdog in general.

Recently, however, a change has been noticeable in the whole character of the party battle, and the chief cause of this change has been the development of an alarming shortage of underdogs. These interesting zoological specimens have now become so rare—at least in any clearly recognizable form—that for all practical purposes the species may be treated as extinct. The fact is that the great menacing problems of social justice, with which we were so intensely concerned during the thirties, have in England, as in most advanced countries, been substantially solved.

In Britain, as the reader is probably aware, we have a highly organized form of socialism which we call the Welfare State. In this Welfare State the citizen is more or less effectively cushioned against the shocks of unmerited misfortune such as unemployment, sickness, want in old age, etc.; in particular, everything humanly possible is done to free the young from the handicaps of circumstance.

It would, of course, be a wild exaggeration to say that all hardship has been eliminated, or that those who have become dependent on allowances paid by the state do not often have to face something very like extreme penury; but nobody is singing in the street or selling bootlaces at the street corner for the price of a cup of coffee. With all its shortcomings, the world in which we live is transformed beyond all recognition from that in which we lived before the war, and, with the possible exception of the Scandinavian countries, British children are probably the healthiest in the world.

Most of the welfare institutions that Britain now enjoys are, of course, already established in America, and often on a much more grandiose scale. But the British system is far more comprehensive and complete than the American, and shows a much more thoroughgoing application of principle. There are two particularly important points of difference. The first is the British free medical service; the second is the existence in Britain of an incomparably greater equality of educational opportunity.

This last statement may surprise American readers, for they have been told often enough of the proportionately much higher number of students at American colleges and universities, and tend to infer from this that more young people in America than in any other country have the chance of developing themselves to the very highest level. But there is an element of illusion here, for a great deal of the education imparted in America to undergraduates at college level is obtained in Britain in the top grades of our secondary and "public" schools. The most essential point, however, is that in Britain anyone genuinely capable of profiting by an education at a universty or kindred institution is really enabled to receive it, whatever his means, and receive it in full. We do not like young people "working their way through college," but regard this, whatever its romantic appeal, as a pernicious diversion of energy. If a young man or young woman shows the necessary outstanding talents, they not only receive any education to which they may aspire, but are given enough money from public funds to make the best of it. From the point of view of social justice and in its long-term sociological effects this is probably the most important, even if, perhaps, the least spectacular, of all the changes that have taken place.

THESE REVOLUTIONARY developments have to some extent cramped the Labor Party's style; they have indeed left its members in the frozen attitudes of evangelists whose gospel has suddenly become outdated and irrelevant. The Welfare State has now arrived, with all the transformation that its underlying spirit implies. It may not be perfect, but it is

Mr. Benvenisti is an English writer and economist who contributes frequently to this magazine.

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about as good as in our present circumstances any reasonable man can hope for, and—what is more important—its existence is accepted without reservation by all shades of political opinion. Nobody wants to do away with it or weaken it, and everyone is agreed that it should be improved where such improvement is possible or necessary. So the Labor Party is left looking for new worlds to conquer, and will be sorely embarrassed should it fail to find them.

However, there is not much danger of that. If freedom from want has nearly been attained, we are further than ever from the other great freedom, freedom from fear. Never have men yearned for it as they do today.

Here then is the opportunity, here the beckoning terrain for both the political crusader and the political crank. And it is here that the most significant feature of the Suez crisis is to be found, for neither crank nor crusader has been able to seize his opportunity.

The Labor Party has, of course, opposed the government over their Suez policy with a fierceness almost without precedent in a major international crisis. This is their constitutional right, and they do not stand entirely alone in exercising it. Several of Sir Anthony's own supporters have rebelled, and at this writing there has been at least one ministerial resignation. Although their utterances are rarely free from some degree of moral coloring, what these Conservative critics are, for the most part, really saying is that the Prime Minister, so far from choosing the lesser of two evils, has in point of fact chosen the greater one, and many Labor supporters are, of course, arguing along similar lines.

Nevertheless, there has been in this debate an undertone of a different kind, audible in implication rather than in direct statement, and the feeling it expressed was that the government's iniquities were due not to an error of judgment but to an ineradicable propensity towards the use of force, an ingrained predilection for the mailed fist and for lording it over peoples more helpless than ourselves. What was at work here was, in part, a kind of ideological hang-over from those happy days of innocence when the theory of the class war still retained some shreds of intellectual respectability.

The regrettable Tory idiosyncrasies to which I have just referred, were, according to that theory, simply the hallmark of that somewhat nebulous entity, the capitalist class, for which wars were merely a means of serving their own deplorable ends and which provoked wars in order that those ends might be served. I do not recollect any member of Her Majesty's opposition putting the matter quite as crudely as this, but the idea was, in some cases at least, dimly there in their minds—sufficiently, at any rate, for the words "imperialist" and "warmonger" to be almost perceptibly trembling upon their lips.

Now this kind of reaction is perfectly legitimate in the rough and tumble of party politics, and can at times even be excellent fun. At this juncture, however, it is exceedingly dangerous, since, at a time when it is particularly necessary for our eyes to be focused on reality, it tends to create an escape mechanism of a highly insidious kind.

Nor does such a commodity lack a market. Indeed, the contrary is the case. Mercifully, the human mind is so constituted as to enable us for long periods of time to forget that we are sitting on top of a volcano, but the awareness persists beneath the surface, and we tend, even in the face of reason and evidence, to seize upon any formula that professes to banish the threat of war, and to impute sinister motive, or at least criminal and even treasonable folly, to anybody who rejects it.

IT IS becoming more and more the role of the Labor Party to give expression to this powerful craving, and this task has to a great extent replaced its original prime function as a champion of social justice. There is no conscious hypocrisy in this, but simply a process of self-identification with those whom its members feel they especially represent and among whom the feeling is probably stronger than anywhere else. For this powerful emotional urge tends to be less inhibited than it would otherwise be through the presence among the great mass of people of a certain curious myopia.

The principle by which we live, the only principle by which it is possible for us to live on this crowded little island, has been declared often enough and is not difficult to understand. It is, nevertheless, one which the ordinary person does not often directly experience in operation.

The ordinary Englishman is told again and again that most of his mutton comes from New Zealand, his tea from India and his oil from the Middle East. It would be ridiculous to pretend that he did not know these things; but they do not set his imagination working, and so the ordinary Englishman—and particularly the ordinary Englishman's wife—does still tend to look upon mutton as something you buy from the butcher's and oil as something you get at the filling station. There is often no associated picture of long and highly precarious sea-borne lines of commerce and supply, and so, when those lines are in any way endangered, the people's reaction is not always as sharp as might be expected.

This purely negative factor reinforces the positive one; and thus, when there is a threat to our livelihood—which is our life—a two-fold tendency becomes discernible. There is a tendency to play down the threat itself, and a tendency to counter it by an evasion of reality.

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This last was surely what the Labor Party was asking the British to indulge in when, in place of positive action, it clamored for the Suez affair to be taken to the United Nations at the very start. It was eminently fitting that we should have gone to the United Nations when we did, and, by doing so, have shown that "decent respect for the opinion of mankind" which a certain American professed on another occasion. To suppose, however, that the United Nations would have done anything in the least effective until Franco-British action had goaded it into action, is surely to fly in the face of all the evidence there is.

Since the cease-fire in Egypt, the extent to which the Soviets have been working behind the scenes in the Middle East has become increasingly clear, and this has to some extent dampened down opposition at home to the Anglo-French move. The Hungarian tragedy has contributed to this by intensifying the feeling against Russia; indeed, never in all the years of the cold war have I known such a wave of hatred and rage to sweep the country as the one this crime has set in motion. But unless zero hour for Armageddon has come at last—which I doubt—tension will one day die down again, as it has done before. It will then once more become apparent that there are other problems of diplomacy and power than those directly connected with the Soviet Union.

WHEN THAT crucial day comes, the Labor Party may well be in power. Although it is true that opposition parties often back-pedal on their declared policies when they take office, I do not think that the Labor Party will back-pedal on this one. The vast emotional *malaise* which will have swept them to the summit will not permit them to do it, and thus, when the next crisis comes, they may throw the game away rather than risk a showdown.

The irony of the situation is that if they do this often enough and with sufficient effect, they will destroy their own child; for despite the fact that a coalition government acted as midwife at its birth, the Welfare State is essentially the Labor Party's baby, and it will be the first casualty if we cease in any significant degree to be a major power and become unable or unwilling to protect our trade. The precise manner of its death I cannot foretell, but it will in all probability be slow and lingering. What is most likely to happen is that the pound would in such a case begin to fall further in value and that the allowance paid by the state would not be adjusted to the rising price level. With employment and national income beginning to fall, as they assuredly will do if anything happens to cripple our trade, we should have to make economies, and could scarcely fail to make one of the most obvious of all.

At the moment, however, Labor is not in office, and, in spite of their opposition, we have, together with the French, gone forward independently and alone, dragging in after us what is at this writing a somewhat bewildered UN police force. In spite of all, we may still fail to attain our objective, which, whether we admit it or no—and I see no conceivable reason why we shouldn't—is the freedom and integrity of the Suez Canal. But whether we fail or succeed, the present government felt it surely had the right to try, and even if the effort proves useless, Britain's position cannot be worse than if it had never tried at all.

But of one thing there must be no manner of doubt. Interference with our trade or with territories, however distant, that are connected with that trade, can, in certain circumstances, be mortal. It can bring about our death in the same crude, literal sense that a man's death is caused if one cuts off his supply of oxygen—and it is in that sense that the United Nations Charter should be interpreted. It is also on this assumption that a responsible British government will, in the last resort, have to act.

COMMUNICATIONS

"AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY"

Chevy Chase, Maryland

To the Editors: While I naturally appreciate the praise bestowed by Mr. George P. Carlin [Nov. 2] on certain aspects of my recent article ["American Foreign Policy" Oct. 19], I find his objections to other aspects poorly founded. Anyone who takes the trouble to compare what I wrote with what he says I wrote will be conscious of a certain lack of correspondence.

In the first place, I did *not* say that we have made a laughing stock of ourselves by opposing Communist China's admission to the UN, but by refusing to allow a group of experienced reporters to accept an invitation to visit Communist China.

As for the basic issue of whether Communist China should be admitted to the UN, Mr. Carlin lets his emotions run away with him and distorts my argument through oversimplification. I said that "at the appropriate time, and on conditions of our own choosing, we should establish a relationship with Communist China which is at least no more hostile than that which we maintain with the Soviet Union." I stand foursquare on that statement and regard the qualifications which I attached to it as very important and indeed as the essence of statesmanship, even if Mr. Carlin does not. If he favors exclusion of Communist China from the UN and the maintenance of a total (in the case of the United States) embargo against her for what she has done in Korea—or in China itself—let him in all honesty demand the expulsion of Russia from the UN

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and the imposition of a total embargo against her for what she has done in Hungary. Then I should be able to understand his position, although I am not sure whether I would agree with it.

Mr. Carlin professes grave concern for the feelings of Asians and a conviction that many of them approve of our opposition to the admission of Communist China to the UN. I share his concern, and much of my time is devoted to following the shifting tides of opinion in Asia, but I cannot exactly agree with his conclusions. It is true that many Asian writers are sharply critical of Communism—though many are not—but it does not necessarily follow that there is an overwhelming demand in Asia for keeping the government, good or bad, of some 600 million people in the position of an international outcast for an indefinite period of time. Why is it that the governments of India and other uncommitted Asian nations generally advocate UN membership for Communist China? After all, they have much more to lose than we by any misbehavior on Peking's part, and it therefore behooves us to give their views at least the courtesy of a fair hearing.

Mr. Carlin advocates helping our Asian allies, by whom I gather he means the SEATO and other Asian powers bound to us by military alliances. While I do not deny that we should help these powers, it must be conceded that they compare rather poorly with the Colombo powers (other than Indonesia) in respect of social and economic progress, political stability, and the like. Perhaps the term ally requires a broader and less military definition than Mr. Carlin appears to attach to it. The only ally he names is Japan, which has just inaugurated diplomatic relations with the USSR, is establishing informal trade relations with Communist China, and would probably move toward diplomatic recognition if it were not for fear of American displeasure.

As I made clear in an earlier article on Asian neutralism, I am not "soft" on Communist China, as Mr. Carlin's letter tends to give the impression that I am. I advocate a very hard policy toward her in areas where her position is at least morally weak, such as Korea, Taiwan, or any other Asian nation. On the other hand, I favor a policy of minimal or at least carefully considered opposition in areas where her position is basically strong, such as the offshore islands.

Contrary to what Mr. Carlin alleges, I did not blame our failure to win victory in Korea on lack of numbers, but on poor strategy and above all on bad military thinking (including an overemphasis on heavy maté riel). Actually there seems to be no fundamental disagreement between us on the Korean war, although he has choosen to make it appear that there is.

Mr. Carlin has violated the first canon of criticism, which is to understand and represent fairly that which one is criticizing. HAROLD C. HINTON

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editors: I was somewhat skeptical of the statement made by Professor Hinton that "The Soviet government pays a skilled scientist in the neighborhood of 25,000 roubles ($1,750 at a realistic exchange rate) per month. . ." [America's Foreign Policy," October 19].

I have therefore checked with a local scientist who visited the atomic energy installations in USSR this spring. He informs me that a graduate with the equivalent of a Ph.D and no experience would receive 3,500 roubles per month, or $245 at the same rate used by Mr. Hinton. The corresponding rate for chemists and chemical engineers in this country is $600 per month. A professor who is not also the head of some installation might receive 10,000 roubles ($700). He also pointed out that there are a few who receive even more than the 25,000, one internationally famous physicist does receive 35,000, plus two cars, etc., but there are very few in this class.

There may then be some doubt that the reason for the Soviet showing in science is "almost entirely economic." JAMES J. DOHENY.

"JOURNEY THROUGH CHANGE"

New York, N.Y.

TO the Editors: I have read with much interest the article "Journey Through Change" by Lawrence T. King in your October 19th issue. This piece and others you have published recently about the problems of depressed farm families have added knowledge in an area where the public is often in ignorance.

As Mr. Lawrence ably points out, Mexican workers and nationals from other countries have been imported in large numbers under contract to private corporate farm interests. These have certainly helped materially in keeping down the wages and living conditions of domestic workers. And now the problem is to be aggravated by the new program dreamed up by the giant farm corporations of the West—that of importing thousands of Japanese workers for private service.

This program is not only perpetuating and extending miserable conditions for our native farm workers; it is not only providing the most unfair competition to the small family farmers and driving many of them off the soil; it may yet do the gravest harm to our relations with the countries from which these unhappy workers are imported. They are not admitted to our country as immigrants with freedom of movement, but as strictly controlled contract-labor answerable to private operators. Many will return to their native lands with dreams of acquiring riches far from fulfilled, but with an experience of near-peonage conditions.

FAY BENNETT.
Executive Secretary, National Sharecroppers Fund, Inc.

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IN PRAISE OF FATHER MURRAY

THANK GOD for John Courtney Murray. Father Murray, a Jesuit, may yet singlehandedly restore the tradition of rational debate to American life. If he succeeds, the whole nation will be his debtor.

Father Murray combines two venerable traditions in one person, the Catholic tradition of reasoned argument and the American tradition of free debate. In him both traditions have found a brilliant latterday spokesman. And this is particularly desirable, since the two traditions need each other. There has been a tendency among Catholic thinkers, wise in the ways of logic, to brush aside the special pragmatic needs of American society and concentrate on the resounding moral pronunciamento, the naked absolute. And there is a general tendency in American life to bypass reason in national controversy in favor of emotion, slogan, group prejudice and wit.

Father Murray, who is as logical as the best of them, never forgets what kind of society he is dealing with. It is a pluralistic society, united on no one religion, code of morals or philosophic belief. It is held together by political aspirations. In the ever-present tension between discipline and freedom, as Father Murray emphasizes, America has chosen to tip the scales in favor of freedom.

Freedom is the highest value in American society, and coercive measures, admittedly necessary, are judged according to how necessary they are to keep freedom alive. The constant problem facing us, as Father Murray has worded it, is this: How pluralistic can a unified society afford to be; how unified does a pluralistic society have to be in order to survive?

What makes Father Murray's contribution so significant is that every time he attacks a problem he does so with one eye on the requirements of freedom and the other on national unity. The tensions between the two are inevitable. But, he believes, they can be satisfactorily resolved as long as the climate of freedom is maintained. And it is here that reason comes into play. The greatest need of the nation today is for rational debate.

Rational debate can do many things. It can clarify issues so that everyone knows precisely what is at stake in any given controversy. It can reduce misunderstanding and ill-feeling between Americans. It can produce solutions, openly arrived at and freely accepted by all parties. Most of all, it can invigorate the climate of freedom.

I heard Father Murray talk once about America. He was speaking of our heritage, and he illustrated his remarks with a reference to sacred history.

When the Egyptians set out to find the Jewish Holy of Holies, they expected to find an idol. But when they came upon the tabernacle of the Hidden God they found nothing, only emptiness. The man who seeks for the American holy of holies may also expect to find some *thing,* an ideology, a philosophy. But when he gets there the man will make a surprising discovery. If he unveils the American holy of holies he too will find emptiness, but the void will be filled with voices engaged in argument and debate.

John Courtney Murray, Jesuit, does not lack the thing called the *sensus Catholicus.* But he has also developed something that might be called the *sensus Americanus,* an instinct for perking up when freedom is threatened.

But it is not enough to have an instinct for freedom. Freedom must be defended with reason and wisdom and wit. And this scholarly priest is endowed lavishly with all three. He has shown time and again an ability to strip the body of controversy down to the bones of fact and of principle. In controversy he talks as a Jesuit should, with no quarter given to slipshod logic or emotional appeal. But he also talks as an American should, with a lively concern for the rights of dissenters and non-conformists and the way of freedom.

For years the subject of censorship has bedeviled American publicists. Catholic spokesmen have distinguished between liberty and license in textbook manner but succeeded in convincing very few outside the flock. Even within the flock many were left unsatisfied. Liberal spokesmen have wrung their hands in holy horror over every small outrage of pressure and coercion. Moralists have addressed each other, and civil libertarians in their private ghetto have read papers at each other. But John Courtney Murray, Jesuit, in recent months, seems to have succeeded as none before him did in making sense out of the confusion.

His censorship article in *Books on Trial* has been nationally distributed, reprinted and discussed. A more recent article in *America,* which responded to a piece in *Harper's,* is reaching people (even through the pages of *The New Republic*) who were formerly chilly to any wisdom on the subject issuing from Catholic sources.

Censorship is only one problem. Father Murray, whose logic and reason are enriched by a literary grace and urbanity rare in any controversialist, has won a respectful national audience for what he has to say on it. Let us hope that he will give his attention to other pressing matters. For the fact is, the nation needs voices like his. America, which feeds on all wisdom, still has much to learn from the Catholic tradition.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE SCREEN

EXCELSIOR

SOME OF the new movies are going to the out-of-doors, but they don't go far enough. The studio shots and obviously artificial aspects detract considerably from the realism of these back-to-nature dramas.

Most of "The Mountain" was photographed in the Chamonix Valley and in the French Alps, and its views in Technicolor and VistaVision are magnificent. The story, which stems from the novel by Henri Troyat, deals with two brothers who climb an almost unclimbable mountain to reach a crashed plane near its peak. Spencer Tracy plays the considerably older brother, who seems to know every crack and crevice but hasn't climbed the mountain for ten years because he has become superstitious about it. Robert Wagner plays the self-centered younger man, whose goal is to loot the cracked-up plane.

The film is effective when it shows the two brothers painfully and slowly advance up the steep and slippery incline or when the slipping rope lets Wagner fall and tears into Tracy's hands. When the plane is finally reached the exhausted Tracy collapses. But not Robert. With renewed energy, he starts his ghoulish looting—until the two men realize that one of the passengers, a lovely Hindu girl (Anna Kashfi) is still alive. The two brothers come to blows when Robert insists that the dying girl be left behind so that no one will know he robbed the plane.

If Producer-director Edward Dmytryk had stuck to the Alps and the mountain-climbing part of the story, he might have had a first-rate film. But, unfortunately, the scenes shot in the studio have a false ring. Spencer Tracy is convincing enough as the mountain-climbing sheepherder, but the rest of the cast are so Hollywood-slick that their roles (even those played by Claire Trevor, William Demarest, Richard Arlen, E. G. Marshall) seem contrived, and Robert Wagner is superficial as the mean brother.

SIBLINGS are also the problem in "Love Me Tender," another outdoor drama. Most of the action takes place in Texas, and some very pleasant rolling scenery is caught in black-and-white CinemaScope photography. Although siblings are the problem, the center of attention is the youngest of four brothers, mainly because the role is played by Elvis Presley. With his hillbilly drawl and relaxed gait, Presley is well cast in his first movie as a young man who stayed home to tend the farm while his three older brothers went off to fight for the South in the Civil War. He makes almost no attempt at acting, which (since his major contribution to the film is his singing of four songs assisted by his guitar and frenzied gyrations) doesn't matter too much until the plot gets heavy-going.

The script, written by Robert Buckner, is no world-beater, but has its interesting situations. The eldest brother (Richard Egan) comes home from the war after being thought dead for two years, and finds the girl he left behind (Debra Paget) married to his grown-up baby brother. Mama (nicely played by Mildred Dunnock except when she has to register approval of Elvis' song-and-squirm numbers) and the other two brothers (William Campbell, James Drury) get wise to the fact that the old love between Debra and Richard has not cooled off and that the household is not going to be a happy one. But Richard is an honorable man and decides to leave at once. Before he can go, however, a Pinkerton man and a Union major show up to arrest the three older brothers for raiding a train and robbing Union funds on the last day of the war. In the ruckus that follows, Elvis thinks his wife is running away with his older brother whom he idolizes. Elvis goes haywire and so does the film, because Elvis' role suddenly becomes important and he isn't up to its demands for tragedy.

Robert D. Webb is a good director and he really tried to make a lively, though not too original, western. Perhaps he tried too hard to tone Debra Paget down to Presley; she doesn't seem quite awake to the unhappy situation. But then neither does Elvis, who smiles and flashes his teeth every now and then to be sure we know that "Love Me Tender" is a musical comedy built around him and his brand of sex appeal.

IT IS hard to say, in the case of "The Brave One," which is the more appealing—Jack Cardiff's magnificent photography of Mexico in Technicolor and CinemaScope, or the touching story of a boy and a bull. Since I'm not particularly pet-minded, for me

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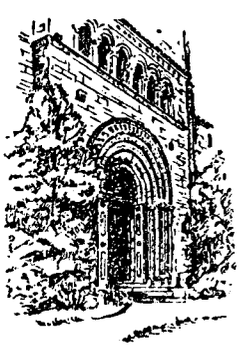

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the scenery wins out. During the course of the plot in which a farmer's son raises, tames and loves the bull, we are treated to stunning shots of the Mexican countryside, Mexico City and the bull ring itself. Director Irving Rapper let our little hero (expertly played by Michel Ray) run too often during the working out of this fascinating tale; he wears one out just to watch him. It was inevitable that the bull would be taken from him and that he would rescue his pet, which would be taken again to be entered in the ring in the big city. Producers Maurice and Frank King made their handsome film in Mexico, and while the adults in the cast seem somewhat forced and uneasy at the business of acting, little Michel Ray and the brave bull, Gitano, are practically perfect in their joyful moments and unhappy times. "The Brave One" is one of those rare films that adults can take kids to with pleasure for all concerned.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

A SHAKESPEARE ENSEMBLE

THE CORDIAL but muted pleasure to which the Old Vic Company has opened its second New York engagement in a decade is in pointed contrast to the public gala of that first occasion. Then, the eminence of Sirs Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson crowned an ensemble no more distinguished, perhaps, than the present one, but elevated finely with the secondary talents of such players as Miss Margaret Leighton and Miss Joyce Redman; then, too, the feverish nullity of the wartime drama had only sharpened the American appetite for a theatre of passion and craft. In the interval, our stage has grown, possibly more eclectic, certainly less provincial: the international clamor of visiting companies (the Comédie-Francaise, the Renaud-Barrault troupe) is only an aspect of the widening sensibility of the New York theater. The ensemble currently at the Winter Garden, harmonious and youthful, wants nonetheless some central radiance and authority: however agreeable it is to talk of a starless and equable balance of performing, a play like "Macbeth" cannot be made to 'work' without this wilful and elusive *daimon*. Hence, the Old Vic scores heavily in such a chronicle as "Richard II," that intricate morality of contending powers, and less so in the lyrically personal "Romeo and Juliet." The "Troilus and Cressida," which will be played in the last weeks of this ample engagement, is promised as an audacious *bonne bouche* in Edwardian dress. This sheaf of Shakespeare constitutes the Vic's traveling repertory, a selection made with exemplary wisdom, if no special provocation of delight or surprise.

"Macbeth" would seem to display the present company in its sober middle range. This is a production of distinctions which too rarely rise to distinction; its momentum and calculated brutishness, however, impress. The dominating motifs are psychological and visual. It was Miss Caroline Spurgeon who first marked decisively the imagery of blood in "Macbeth," and the Londoners have smeared their production viscously with reddish ochre. The broken anarchic boulders which strew the stage, the looped and riotous tartans, even the lachrymose bagpipes (a bit dragging, these) are suffused with bardic horror. Not all is so well realized: the witches bubble and caw, but shapelessly; both the pathos and infamy of Lady Macduff's murder are blunted. And in their river of blood, Macbeth and his lady stand curiously diminished: she is Miss Joan Crawford as Holinshed might have seen her, casting a glossy and covetous eye on those new palace tartans, and for her greed, how she pays, how she pays! He is a study in the disintegrating psyche, gibbering finally into the tangled nullities of the solitary self. Imperceptibly, the tragic arena of these two figures has been circumscribed: one misses the wildness which is all in "Macbeth," that primal rage and bafflement to counterpoint the play's inexorable logic of morality. Yet *faute de mieux,* this production arrests the attention, and certain of its effects—for one, the entrance of Lady Macbeth as a trailing smoke of malignity—are vividly potent.

FROM this point of respectable weight and honor, the decline to "Romeo and Juliet" is sharp indeed. I confess to some weariness—perhaps that of familiarity—with the star-crossed lovers and their style-crossed history; fatigue with these Shakespearean strategems of vial and vault, potion and plague. Plausibly, a ritualized mounting of the work, formal and embossed, might provide some foil to the subjective lyricisms of its lovers: as it is, they stand unrivaled in rhetorical hysteria. The central theatrical problem of "Romeo and Juliet" is to adjust its sequences of time and motive within a coherent dramatic scale; Mr. Robert Helpmann blurs these in his amorphous and disconnected production. Costumes of an ugly and frivolous motley do not discriminate the nest of familial antagonisms and loyalties; lighting which renders the stage almost invisible has no relation to sensibility, and the music of a twanging guitar—suitable perhaps to the emotional terms of "Death in the Afternoon"—can in no way suggest the tawny prick of Renaissance sensuality. It is vexing, also, to see a Juliet whose prosy, chic, pert coiffure is more in keeping with Miss Elizabeth Arden's *salon* than a Veronese chamber.

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THE BEST for the last: Mr. Michael Benthall's production of "Richard II" stands—in solidity and architectural proportion, grace and design—as the handsomest professional homage which has been paid to Shakespeare in New York for years. After an abrupt and indeterminate opening, in which the points of motive might be sharpened decidedly, it moves into an unbroken vein of fluent and elegant statement. Statement is, indeed, the natural mode of this play, which is built gravely upon the stone of kingship, and full of a national piety warmed by love and chastened with grief. Its air and structure of elaborate ceremonial is exquisitely enforced in Mr. Benthall's production: within that frame, the private, lyrical tragedy of the unstable Richard—a study, smaller in scale, of the later embattled heroes—has individual poignancy and public inevitability. The dominating motif here is pageant: the play unfolds with the controlled solemnity of a tapestry, and its composition of dramatic images seems modeled on late medieval designs. Mr. Leslie Hurry's permanent stage lends itself with supple grace to the evolving sequence of time and place, and not the least excellence of the production is the musical duality it establishes of ceremonial trumpets in counterpoint to the melody of lutes and virginals.

At this moment in its fortunes, the virtues of the present Old Vic Company are vigor and clarity of speech, and an honest attempt to communicate prose meanings of the dramatic language. Two personalities, male, dominate the ensemble: Mr. Paul Rogers, an actor of thoughtful weightiness and even power, though no special refinement of imagination, and Mr. John Neville, a player of sensibility in the Gielgud tradition. Mr. Rogers' Mercutio is effective, his John of Gaunt austerely imposed. The psychological acuity of his Macbeth is its largest excellence; he marks the character's systematic extinctions of feeling with a chill fatality. Mr. Neville's melancholy elegance, his beauty of voice and person, want some fire, if not of blood then of spirit. His Romeo, that role which only a turbulence and heat of passion can make possible, exists in a sonorous vacuum. He fully commands, however, Richard's cadenced music of self-pity and tragic sentiment. The power and whitened intensity with which Mr. Neville etches this figure of fantastic grief makes secure his place in the British theater. Miss Claire Bloom is an actress of wan and touching personality; the eccentricity with which she interrupts the rhythm of the verse, however, is continuously distracting. Lady Macbeth is played by Miss Coral Browne with a sinuous, fleshly allure, and considerable dramatic intelligence.

"Troilus and Cressida" will join the repertory on December 26th, and the New York engagement is scheduled to close on January 12th. (*At the Winter Garden.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

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Critics' Choices for Christmas

ANTHONY BAILEY

THE Acceptance World. By Anthony Powell. Farrar. $3.50. Mr. Powell may well be the finest novelist writing in England today and his sequence, "The Music of Time," of which this is the third volume, may look increasingly important as it, and time, goes on. Very witty too.

Fifteen Modern American Poets. Edited by George P. Elliott. Rinehart. $1.65. A very fine paper-bound anthology of some of the "younger" American poets. It is a judicious selection which gives the reader room for his own appraisal. Bishop, Eberhart, Roethke, Miles, Scott and Wilbur, among others.

The Sailor, Sense of Humour, and Other Stories. By V. S. Pritchett. Knopf. $4.50. If Mr. Powell is England's finest novelist, Mr. Pritchett is probably her best short-story writer. He has a keen eye for eccentricity, a masterful ability to create memorable characters.

The Acquisitive Society. By R.H. Tawney. Harvest Books—Harcourt Brace. $1.25. This book is still as timely and as sane as it was when first published in 1920. The New Deal and the Welfare State may have taken some of the wind out of Mr. Tawney's sails but as an analysis of rights and obligations in society this book remains a classic.

Essays in Literary Criticism. By George Santayana. Scribner. $7.50. Sharp and incisive. Santayana wrote a lucid, delightful prose and in this book he sparkles on various literary subjects, from Lucretius to Dickens. One wonders why this type of criticism ever went out of fashion.

JOHN COURNOS

GALLIPOLI. By Alan Moorhead. Harper. $4.50. Remarkably lucid, beautifully graphic narrative of a luckless military campaign which comes close to being a classic of its kind.

Anglo-Saxon Attitudes. By Angus Wilson. Viking. $4.50. Disruption of family and social relations, indicative of Britain's decline, told with skill and detachment in this novel by an Englishman.

Profiles in Courage. By John F. Kennedy. Harper. $3.50. Stimulating for its espousal of honest American statesmen who in hours of crisis had formulated brave decisions.

The Bible as History. By Werner Keller. Morrow. $5.95. A fascinating narrative of exploration and excavation to confound those who have considered the Bible as a sort of fairy tale.

This Hallowed Ground. By Bruce Catton. Doubleday. $5.75. An absorbing orderly history of the Union side of the Civil War, singularly interesting for its backgrounds and for lights thrown on the personalities who led the Union to victory.

JAMES FINN

ROOSEVELT: The Lion and the Fox. By James MacGregor Burns, Harcourt. $5.75. This is a highly readable political biography by an admirer of Roosevelt, but an admirer who can make incisive criticisms. What emerges is a convincing figure with all of his varied strengths and weaknesses.

Malone Dies. By Samuel Beckett. Grove. $1.25. Samuel Beckett extends the boundaries of the novel. The form he has devised demands that the author take real risks. Mr. Beckett has taken them, and in my opinion he is triumphant.

Long Day's Journey into Night. By Eugene O'Neill. Yale University Press. $3.75. If I had read nothing else of O'Neill's, this work would have converted me into an O'Neill enthusiast. It is a fiercely moving play with the familiar O'Neill repetitions achieving an intense cumulative effect.

The World of Mathematics. Edited by James R. Newman. Simon and Schuster. 4 Vols. $20. This huge anthology has a right to appropriate the title it did. That it contains something for everyone is its slightest claim. (It does have puzzles, limericks, fables, paradoxes and stories.) Contributions by and about great mathematicians from Galileo to Bertrand Russell will be of interest to even the interested amateur although some articles, I suspect, are available only to first-rate mathematicians.

The Mirror in the Roadway. By Frank O'Connor. Knopf. $4.50. Certainly not a great book, but neither is any other book on the novel. And this is both provocative and interesting as Mr. O'Connor engagingly defends the novel under the banner of its great nineteenth-century virtues.

ANNE FREMANTLE

THE Nun's Story. By Katherine Hulme. Little, Brown. $4. At last, the reader feels, the great American Catholic novel we have all been waiting for; but it is a most factual, accurate biography. And none the less great for that. Sister Luke's adventures, in Belgium and the Belgian Congo, in the Resistance and with crazed natives or quicksands, are only less exciting than her adventures inside of herself.

The Flight. by Ruth Stephan. Knopf. $4.75. An uncannily osmotic historical novel; told in the first person by Queen Cristina of Sweden. The atmosphere of the half-savage court and the personality of the wholly civilized M. Descartes are admirably rendered.

James, by the Grace of God. By Hugh Ross Williamson. Regnery. $3.75. Another excellent historical novel, about the least attractive and most honorable of the Stuarts, James II, by an Anglican clergyman-convert who knows his country well.

The Presence of Grace. By J. F. Powers. Doubleday. $2.95. Short stories as universal in significance as they are circumscribed in setting. Mr. Powers knows the inside of the human heart as well as he knows the geography of his rectories.

Silence in Heaven. By Thomas Merton. T. Y. Crowell. $7.95. About the most beautiful book I have ever seen, and the sure cure for today's news. Photos and text about the daily round of monastic

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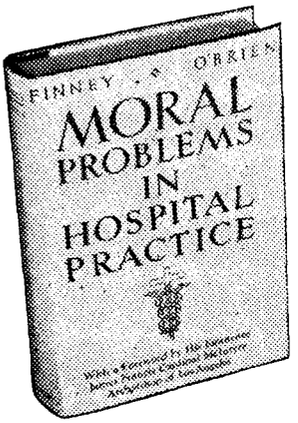

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JAMES GREENE

THIS LIST reflects, I suppose, my tendency to go along with the general drift toward more anthologies and collected short stories. I see no reason to resist, however; few of the novels I have managed to read in the past year have impressed me. This does not mean that good novels are not being published. The book review pages of this and other magazines would give the lie to such a proposition. But perhaps others who are presenting lists have had better luck than I in this respect.

All Manner of Men. Edited by Riley Hughes. Kenedy. $3.95. This book is a collection of stories originally printed in Catholic periodicals. For those who coast on the assumption that nothing creative is being done in the American Catholic literary world, this book will come as a bump. Mr. Hughes has assembled good fiction in which the problems, defeats and triumphs revolve around a center of faith. His book deserves wide distribution through both Catholic and non-Catholic communities.

The Orwell Reader. Introduction by Richard Rovere. Harcourt. $5.95. A very successful attempt to place in one volume the best of George Orwell's writings. There can be found in these pages every important facet of what was a very complex personality. Some of the material is unavailable anywhere else and so the book should be of interest even to those who have read most of the man's work. Orwell's writings lend themselves very well to this kind of treatment. Mr. Rovere's introduction is short, clear and incisive.

The Fall of a Sparrow. Nigel Balchin. Rinehart. $3.75. This is a very fine story of the life of a mythomaniac in England before and through the second world war. The novel can be read simply for entertainment, but for those who care there is a great deal beneath Mr. Balchin's polished style.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

THE Power Elite. By C. Wright Mills. Oxford. $6. The most intelligent, fascinating and probing book of political and social analysis to appear in America in a long, long time.

Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox. By James MacGregor Burns. Harcourt. $5.75. I disagree with Mr. Burns' politics, but I'm impressed by the remarkable honesty which this admirer of FDR brings to his biographical study of him. A whole host of Roosevelt myths are shattered.

The Last Hurrah. By Edwin O'Connor. Little, Brown. $4. This is not a book for the ages, or even for the decade. The social analysis is not very profound—but it's just about the funniest novel I've read in years.

In Search of Heresy. By John Aldridge. McGraw. $4. This book of critical essays has many flaws, yet the reviewers received it, in general, with little realization of its considerable worth. Maybe that's because too many critical dogmas are given a going-over.

In the paperbacks, there were many excellent things published. Let Erwin Panofsky's *Meaning in the Visual Arts (Anchor. $1.45.)* stand as representative of the long list of important works which came out in inexpensive editions

Finally, I want to list a book that came out three years ago, but which I didn't read until this year. Suzanne Langer's *Feeling and Form (Scribner. $7.)* is, to my mind, the most exciting, brilliant and suggestive work in literary criticism to have been published in a decade.

EDWIN KENNBECK

MOLLOY and *Malone Dies. By Samuel Beckett. Grove. $3. and $1.25.* These two fantastic novels can perhaps be considered one book—the same book. They

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are dreadful, disgusting, funny, confusing, and sad, sad, sad.

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. By Gertrude Stein. Modern Library $.95. Published this year as a paperback. Gertrude Stein could be very humorous and could not be anything but a genuinely independent spirit, as her autobiography shows. More or less incidentally she communicates the sweet charm of her delightful companion Miss Toklas.

Like a Bulwark. By Marianne Moore. Viking $2.50. A tiny *sui generis* volume: eleven poems of admiration. They are somehow both eccentric and precise, anyhow beautiful. Like Gerard Manley Hopkins, Miss Moore has a passion for exactness that can reopen one's eyes to the look and value of the things of this world.

The Presence of Grace. By J. F. Powers. Doubleday. $2.95. Mr. Powers is an extraordinarily compassionate writer with a profound sense of what is noble and what is evil. He is also a wit and a master of concision who knows when a paragraph should stop.

PHILIP SCHARPER

THE American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century. By R. W. B. Lewis. University of Chicago. $5.50. A fascinating study of how early nineteenth-century America conceived itself as the "new man," the innocent Adam in a bright new world. Reality finally forced recognition of itself in that awareness of evil shown in the writings of the elder James, and then emerged as tragic irony in the works of Henry James, Hawthorne, and Melville. Indispensable for anyone who is interested in the philosophical lineage of Faulkner, Bellow, Hemingway or Salinger.

The Course of American Democratic Thought. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. Ronald Press. $6. A welcome (and revised) second edition of the book in which Mr. Gabriel first traced the tendencies and tensions in America's image of herself as a democracy.

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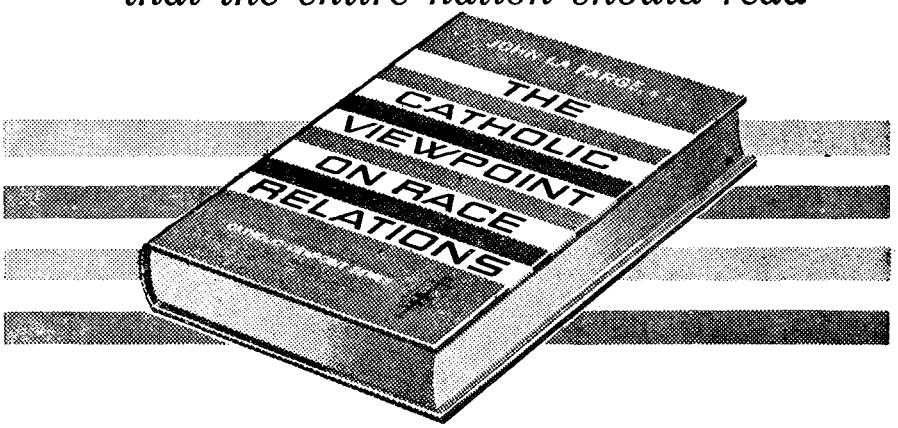

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this book is an important addition to the growing body of critical examinations by American scholars capable of examining our heritage without arrogance or apology.

The Poetry of Meditation. By Louis L. Martz. Yale University Press. $5. An excellent analysis of English religious poetry in the seventeenth century. The author attempts to show that the poetry of Donne, Herbert, Marvell, etc., find unity less in their "metaphysical" qualities than in their derivation from the art of religious meditation which the Counter Reformation had developed. By tracing the parallel structures of religious meditation and religious poetry in the seventeenth century, Martz has thrown new and welcome light not only upon the metaphysicals, but upon such modern descendants as Hopkins, Eliot and Auden.

Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought. Edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall. Macmillan. $6.50. Niebuhr's mastering ideas are here critically analyzed by twenty thinkers of such calibre as Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich and Father Gustave Weigel. Mr. Niebuhr then comments on his commentators.

Reinhold Niebuhr has often insisted, as he does here, that he is not primarily a theologian. His disclaimer is given point by the fact that the most trenchant critiques of his thought are those given by theologians—most notably, by Paul Tillich and Father Weigel.

The book also shows, however, the political and social viability of Niebuhr's theology, and makes clear the constant commerce in his thought between the abstract and the concrete, the world of thought and the world of things. His refusal to take refuge in either is, in itself, a valuable contribution.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

ROOSEVELT: The Lion and the Fox. By James MacGregor Burns. Harcourt. $5.75. If we exclude works of personal reminiscence, this book is easily the best work on Franklin Roosevelt's career in the White House. It is thorough, scholarly, incisive in its analysis, and highly readable. The result is a vivid portrait of Roosevelt's successes and failures as a national political leader. Burns succeeds despite a lamentable weakness for the artificial categories and other trumperies of "political science." (Who, incidentally, was first responsible for trying to make the humane art of politics, that eternal struggle of power and conscience, into a science?) Burns may be too severe on Roosevelt at certain points, but he has the courage to argue a unifying thesis and he argues it well.

The World at Home. By Anne O'Hare McCormick. Knopf. $4.50. This reviewer was not a regular reader of the late Mrs. McCormick's contributions to the editorial page of the New York *Times*. Although she was a specialist on foreign affairs, this collection of her columns and special articles is largely devoted to her writings on the domestic scene which, according to the book's editor, are less "dated" than on international topics. It is an agreeable surprise to discover that Mrs. McCormick was a stylist of considerable distinction. She also had a genuine talent for capturing the mood and pace of the persons and situations she described. The book provides a rewarding retrospect on the United States during the last thirty years.

The Looking Glass Conference. By Godfrey Blunden. Vanguard. $3.75. An hilarious novel based on the Geneva Conference which settled the Indo-China War in 1954. More thinly-disguised personal journalism than fiction. *The Looking Glass Conference* affords an urbane and very funny view of diplomacy and of many international figures still making front-page news.

Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman. By A. J. P. Taylor. Knopf. $4.75. Mr. Taylor, the distinguished Oxford historian, has here written a brilliant short biography of the maker of modern Germany. Bismarck emerges, in this unconventional portrait, as an enigmatic, neurotic, romantic cynic quite different from the "blood and

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iron" stalwart pictured in the history textbooks. Mr. Taylor blends Bismarck's personality, his diplomatic and political maneuvers, and a good deal of nineteenth century German and European history into a brief, cogent, and illuminating book.

Long Day's Journey into Night. By Eugene O'Neill. Yale University Press. $3.75. This profoundly moving tragic drama was apparently wrought out of painful autobiographical material. No artist has been better able "to face my dead at last" or leave a more impressive personal testament of that confrontation.

LEO. R. WARD

THE Last Hurrah. By Edwin O'Connor. Little, Brown. $4. Mr. O'Connor must rate as the Catholic author of the year in America. The dispassionate observer, he is the first to give us without praise or blame a story of American urban Irish tangled up in dirty politics.

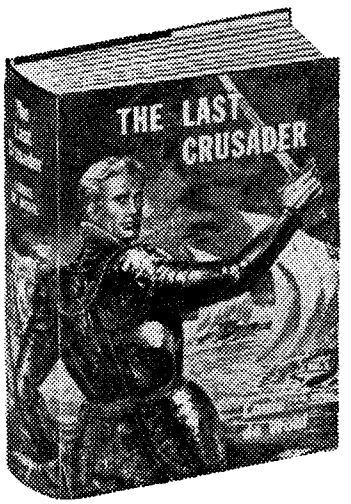
The Living Bread. By Thomas Merton. Farrar. $3. Thomas Merton brings Christ out of the mist and makes contemplative life and union with God respectable and glamorous and even indigenous in America. This is one of his best books.

The Catholic Church, U. S. A. Edited by Louis J. Putz. Fides. $5.95. A contributed book somewhat uneven, but on a big subject and well organized. Must be taken for some time as "inside the Catholic Church, U. S. A." Most competent and perhaps most enlightening is the chapter on the Church in New England.

American Catholics and the Intellectual Life. By John Tracy Ellis. Heritage. $1.25. It is almost ungracious to size up an achievement built on sacrifice and to create wide interest in the criticism. Father Ellis succeeds in a tiny book which, though simple, is the liveliest and most germinal yet written on education by an American Catholic.

The Nun's Story. By Kathryn Hulme. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $4. and *A Right to be Merry. By Sister Mary Francis. Sheed & Ward. $3.*

LOUIS DE WOHL's



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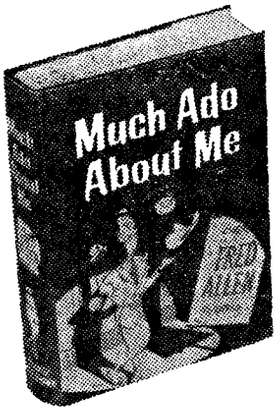

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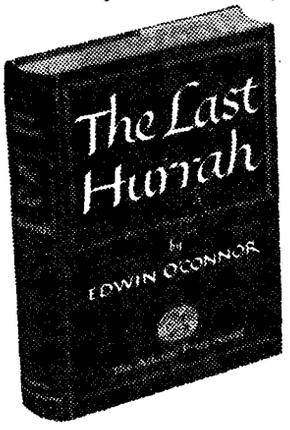

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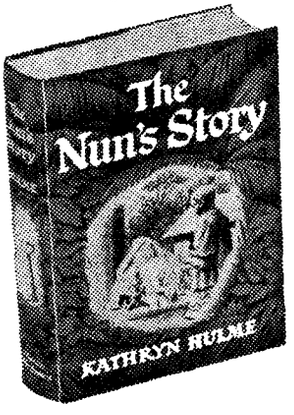

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Challenges of Our Time

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH ART. By Anton Henze and Theodore Filthaut. Sheed and Ward. $7.50.

By H. A. REINHOLD

THE OLD saying that there is no way of settling an argument about differences in taste makes it clear that "taste" is one of the most subjective criteria of judgment, and yet bourgeois generations of the recent past have used "taste" as the ultimate in appraising art, religious and otherwise. If you had a taste for the Romanesque, like the late Kaiser, you not only planted a Romanesque church smack in the middle of the amusement center of Berlin, but you even had it surrounded with Romanesque cafes and department stores. If your taste ran to Gothic, you built a flamboyant or Tudor Gothic church next to a neo-baroque apartment house and saw its religiousness in pointed arches or flying buttresses, things usually not found in post offices and railroad stations. On this plane, dealing with taste, nobody could prove or disprove anything.

While this may be valid in a sort of penultimate way, taste can not be the last criterion for the maker, the user and the critic. Something more is required, a rationale. This is what has been offered with competence by our authors, with the help of the famous instruction on Church art promulgated by the Holy See and of the clear and precise pronouncements by the French and German hierarchies.

Both authors dig deep, historically as well as theoretically, and come up with clear and convincing results. The purposes of Church art are clearly stated and a new start is made. Obviously our image of Christ and the Church is one responding to the challenges of our time. To our contemporaries, Christ is the *Brother-Redeemer* (see their interesting diagram on page 40); the characteristic building of our day is the tentlike, light and airy industrial building, not the thick-walled castle with vaults and small windows or the royal hall encased in luminous carpets of stained glass. Ground plan and elevation of a church will therefore have to answer this sociological data, unless religion is of the escapist variety that seeks shelter in forms created by a past dead by now, whatever we may call it, even if we speak of the "age of faith."

A liturgical movement which started as a nostalgia and as a revolt against vulgarity and clichés has found itself and has become mature, yet simple as a child it strives to bring the people of the Church back to participation in the Christ-mysteries and to disinter this sacramental structure of Christ for our generation. It uses an idiom of forms that a modern person can understand. The authors do exactly this and do it with courage, conviction and wise moderation. This book should be read by Catholic laymen as well as by priests and expert craftsmen, because the layman pays for the "show" and must understand when the clergy and experts build for him.

Let us pick two practical questions and the authors' answer: Where should the altar be, in the physical dead center of the church surrounded by the people on all sides, or against the end wall of the sanctuary, or close to the congregation but within the sanctuary? Startling or superficially plausible solutions have been offered, like the "democratic" one with the altar in the center, "where all can see." There we have already the basic

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mistake: the purpose is not even achieved because each quadrant of the circle gets a different view or even none at all and "viewing" is not the ultimate purpose of our attendance at Mass. Mass is a well regulated interplay of different roles in which, beside the clergy, the laity have an active part, opposite the priest who represents Christ. It is not a show for a silent audience, but a dramatic "commercium" as the liturgy calls it and therefore the proper position is then achieved when the celebrant, with his assistants, is so placed that he faces the congregation as a compact whole, as a conductor faces his orchestra (a comparison not to be pressed beyond its momentary usefulness). Man is not built like a periscope but has a front, is one-directional in all his higher actions and reactions. Therefore we should be face to face. The simplest way to illustrate this point is this example: unless the congregation is off on one end, where should the priest turn when he greets them with his frequent salutations? The novel and startling solution is not the legitimate answer to architectural problems of our day, but the functional one, even though it may startle accidently those who have taken all arrangements for granted, because we have been doing things in a superficially "traditional" way.

What about images? This is our second example of the authors' approach. "The cult-image, in its primary sense, is something altogether alien to the [Church]. Images are in no way indispensable to her cult [which] only requires a place, an altar, a book, vessels and vestments, but not an image." (page 19) What is required, however, is a "sign of the infinite," and this should be seen as a subordinate part of the artistic whole of the church and with formed close attention to the hierarchic order established by the "economy of salvation." Therefore, all impressionism, historicism, "realism" and naturalism is bad in this field as it detracts from the character of Sign of the infinite God in this place where all is sign: the sacraments are *signa practica,* as the schoolmen taught, sacrament-mystery, not mystery play.

The book is amply documented, avoids no real problem, is modest in its answers and is well-illustrated with examples of modern art. It would be interesting to find a date on the plates and to see some of the new churches in Italy, England, Poland and Spain as well as South America and the missions, even at the expense of some of the material given now, which is American, French and German only. However, the plates are an excellently

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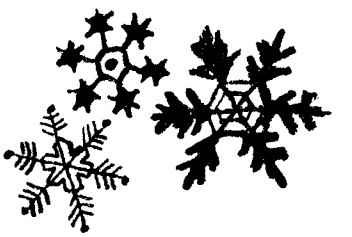

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Communist Terror and British Rule

AND THE RAIN MY DRINK. By Han Suyin. Little, Brown. $4.

By PATRICIA DONEGAN

THE VARIED contrasts of divergent loyalties, political systems and nationalities in the Malayan peninsula are the concern of Han Suyin's new book, *And the Rain My Drink*. The violence, color and confusion the author sees in Malaya are vivid; the characters, seen in a kaleidoscope of shifting scenes and situations, are vital and alive; but the reader might wish that some of the confusion had not also penetrated Miss Suyin's style, that some of the breathlessness of her descriptions had been eliminated for the sake of conciseness.

Actually, the task attempted in this book is a very difficult one; it is a kind of panorama writing, resulting from a desire to treat fairly the points of view of a number of different groups and of individuals within these groups, Malays, Chinese, Indian and English all trying to live together under an emergency situation in which Communist terrorism and British rule are in direct conflict. The author tries, with a considerable degree of success, to reveal these individuals from the standpoint of their particular ideologies and cultural backgrounds. She uncovers good and bad in the British administrator, and does the same with her "People Inside," the jungle Communists. Also, bent on dealing justly with the problem, she tries to show the status of those in the middle, neither pro-British nor pro-Communist, but pro-Malaya.

This rather complicated statement of pros and cons makes sustained characterization difficult if not impossible, and a further devotion to long descriptions makes the book at times confusing. As the author herself says, "There is only repetitious exuberance, the raw, undiluted essence of growth, a violence in all that I apprehend, in which I must not instil significance, for at the moment it dispenses none. This is Malaya. And there is no pattern yet. Only confusion."

Of the vast cast of characters which make up the story here, however, a wavering spotlight is fastened on two—a British Police Officer named Luke Davis and a Chinese girl, a captured Communist turned informer. These two, independent of each other, reappear, but do not really grow or change until the end of the book when there is a burst of recognition for each one. For Davis, whose dogged idealism makes him uncomfortable with the tools of authority, the recognition is so slight as to be almost lost. It comes when he discovers the possibility of a love abandoned at almost the same moment. With Ah Mei, it is the scene of her ultimate betrayal, the complete warping of her loyalties when she informs on her lover, and in both cases the author says, and in the same words, that there is no room or place or soil for such intimate loyalties in the teeming violence of the country.

The many other characters are seen in kaleidoscope, no less vivid if they are briefly drawn. The author is at her best in these characterizations, glimpses of personalities within the stresses of specific situations. Again, here, there is no real growth, no sustaining of the character to the point of climax, but rather, an appearance, a reappearance, and the problem of each, clearly defined in the original, is left dangling and unresolved.

Here again is the panoramic quality of the book. While Big Dog Tsou, terrorist turned capitalist, does proceed to an eventual climax, the loneliness of Quo Boon, millionaire and father of a Communist, is but

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hinted at, and the sadness of his daughter, Intellectual Orchid, though stated, is never resolved. One wishes that Miss Suyin could have penetrated more deeply and through a greater span of time, just one of these characters, because they are fascinating people. One of the most poignant chapters is entirely concerned with the diary of a young Communist terrorist, Chan Ah Pak, one of the "People Inside." The young man's loyalties and loneliness are treated here with beautiful precision and the diary form does not permit Miss Suyin to become too involved with complicated descriptive passages.

The author's style is sensuous and at times very direct, but her desire to pin down visual impressions and fine points of emotion becomes so intense, apparently, that occasionally her descriptions are a tangle of adjectives and qualifying phrases. Her treatment of individual character, on the other hand, is so full of vitality, that it outweighs many faults of the book.

The Testers

THEY'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER. By Robert Wernick. Illustrated by J. Leone. Norton. $2.95.

By JOHN P. SISK

THIS LIVELY little book is a critical introduction to psychometrics for the layman. It will be useful to those who, having had their minds measured and their futures plotted, simply want to know more about what happened to them, as well as to those who, having perhaps been too often measured, share Mr. Wernick's uneasiness about a profession "that is growing quietly in power every day." Since by now the completely untested man is as rare as a sideshow freak, the number of the curious and the uneasy gives the author a tremendous potential audience.

For the curious there is a great deal about tests here: their history, their varieties, their methods of construction, their fields of application, their reliability. They will learn how norms are determined, variations provided for and cheaters anticipated; how tests are tested and their validity established; how the mathematician, statistician and IBM machine fit into the picture. An ingenious chapter demonstrates the whole process by sending an aging Don Juan to the psychometrician for a test that will simplify his search for fresh conquests. On all this Leone's numerous drawings make an amusing comment.

For the uneasy there are Mr. Wernick's skepticism about the pretensions of test-makers and the de-

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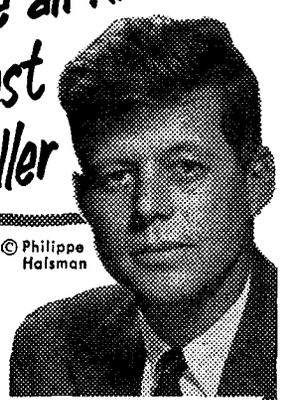

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light he takes in exposing them. The tester, as the author sees him, is working towards an ideal predictability, when he "will be able to send people to their fate without waiting for the intervening experiences"—gangsters to jails, generals to monuments and Nobel prizes to cradles. Against such a day he suggests two systems of defense: physical violence and cheating. Nature itself supplies a third defense: "The human mind is simply not refined enough for a testing world." The machine can be beaten "because its fine purity snaps and snarls on the coarse material that is fed to it."

Obviously such a treatment will tend to turn the merely curious into the uneasy and skeptical—as perhaps it should. For if the tester helps the individual he also often abuses, terrifies and outrages him. He infringes on the testee's privacy, frightens him with the prospect of not measuring up to possibly irrelevant standards and implies that he is only a perforated tidbit for an IBM machine. He, or those his tests serve, refuses to make the act of faith that for some people is fundamental to human relations: he refuses to take a chance with the individual.

Nevertheless I must on principle say a word for the psychometrist, however much I find myself on Mr. Wernick's side. One of the troubles with a book of this sort is that it is too easy for the layman to agree with it. The sciences, or the specialized fields that use scientific techniques, are sitting ducks from the layman's often intensely conservative and frightened point of view; and they make themselves fatter targets in proportion as they do what they ought to do: press forward into the unknown. Besides, is not the layman himself with his passionate demand for certainty greatly responsible for the proliferation of tests and the absurdities that result? Perhaps when he derides the tester he is often trying to punish him for failing to predict as accurately as the layman would like him to.

But I don't wish to give the impression that this book simply takes up where Standen's *Science Is a Sacred Cow* left off. Mr. Wernick has written a more literate and better humored book. He is capable of giving the psychometricians their due, particularly in the earlier chapters. After all, the tester is not always "out to get your number," and the public is not well served if it is led to believe so. But when this point has been made the thought of how often the tester overvalues his "very tentative groping toward an understanding of human behavior" is still disturbing.

The Curate's Egg

THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES 1956. Edited by Martha Foley. Houghton Mifflin. $4.

By ANTHONY BAILEY

IT STUMPS one a little to read an anthology such as this for the first time. There is at once a daring and a coyness about it: as if anyone could read all or even most of the short stories published in this country in one year and still

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have the strength and faith to decide "These are the Best." Well, here they are anyway; and a quick perusal of the list of magazines at the back will show that Miss Foley has hunted high and low: from *Husk* and *Harper's* to *Playboy* and *Today's Woman*. And those who did not make these pages *in toto* are mentioned, in dispatches as it were, in a long listing at the end: first, the "Roll of Honor," and then "Distinctive Short Stories." In other words, if you have doubts, look up the back numbers of *Quixote* and *Mademoiselle* and make up your own mind. With a sort of half-hearted catholicity Miss Foley mentions a few foreign authors here too.

These are indeed American stories. In fact the first value of this book, to this reviewer at least, lies not so much in that these stories may be prime examples of the art but in their scope. To list some of the characters and their occupations in their order of appearance: a New York importer (a widower), an Alaskan surveyer, a rich alcoholic, an out-of-work advertising executive, two small girls, an elderly maiden Lady (deep South), a Hobo, a trader living among the Navahos, a candidate for State Governor, Jews in New York, Armenians in New York, a Mexican Girl, a New Orleans doctor among Creoles, a young boy in the deep South who has never seen a Negro, a man who runs a ceramics shop in Philadelphia, a young man who runs a silk screen printer in N.Y., an Indian guide in Delhi, and an emigré German professor in the Midwest. Perhaps one would need a few of Mr. J. F. Powers' priests to round it off quite properly.

Taken as a whole the subject matter of these stories is more noticeable than their quality. Each author seems to know a great deal about his chosen background. The details are carefully painted in, with a relish one begins to take for granted in American fiction. If one says that most of these stories are factually instructive it is not meant in a belittling manner, but merely to indicate that from them one can learn a great deal about the way different kinds of people live in many places on this continent. Other than that there is a disconcerting thing several of these stories have in common: a common style. It is common in both senses: similar, and lacking distinction. To take Mr. William Eastlake as exemplar of this style is not to denigrate his story, "The Quiet Chimneys," which is effective and moving in a tight-lipped kind of way. However, one paragraph runs:

"They arrived now at one of the hogans of the Navaho. The trader stopped the blue pickup and the wives who were riding in the back got off. The hogan was octagonal-shaped and made of vertically

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placed cedar posts chinked with adobe. The roof was conical and of mud, laced underneath with piñon. There was a hole in the middle for the smoke to come out when they cooked, but there was no smoke from any of the hogans."

This post-Hemingway, dry laconic style becomes wearing, as does the completely colloquial, conversational style: what is gained in pace seems to be lost in distance, in point of view. One character sounds very much like the next and the author rarely sits in judgment. If he does, faced as we are with this anonymous manner, how are we to tell? Why, presented with so much graceless English, should we really care?

This is no general indictment; yet it seems a pity that even five of these stories, original in plot and character, should be spoilt for what is in the last resort bad writing. The language is flat, wooden, uninspired; they lack *flair*, verve, poetry. For the rest Mr. Robert M. Coates demonstrates in his story "In a Foreign City" that he is surely one of the 'Best' short-story writers working today; I admired Mr. George P. Elliott's strange and rather powerful "Is He Dead?" though he doesn't quite escape my complaint about style; campaign medals to Shirley Jackson, Philip Roth, Flannery O'Connor, and Samuel Yellen.

Altogether this book is perhaps best described in the phrase of the English curate, who, when asked by his Bishop with whom he was breakfasting "How is your egg?" replied: "Oh, good in parts."

Segregation

SEGREGATION. By Robert Penn Warren. Random House. $1.95.
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Southerner is not always the man best able to judge and cure. He rightly says that others cannot do the things that must be done in the South. Robert Penn Warren says it. But Mr. Warren's report on segregation is, in the last analysis, the report of a profound Southern failure. There is, says one of the Southerners quoted by Mr. Warren, "a fifth column of decency here, and it will, in the end, betray the extremists, when the politicians get through." That is also the author's conclusion. He argues in the interview with himself that concludes this small and moving book that the Southerner's problem is to learn to live with himself. "I don't think that you can live with yourself when you are humiliating the man next to you."

It is, of course, a temptation to believe that the line between the good and the bad easily is drawn. (A New York newspaperman, for example, confessed in a recent television appearance that on a trip to the South he had learned what he considered the remarkable fact that some of those who feel most strongly about keeping segregation are honest, even admirable people.) Warren is conscious of the geologic depth of racial feeling in the South as perhaps no non-Southerner can be. It is evident in this book, as is the moral torture of those who know that what they do is wrong yet dread the consequences of change and fear the wrench of the change itself. It is all made brilliantly evident in Mr. Warren's report. But this reviewer—on whom the South also has its claims—sees it as finally a disheartening report that the fifth column of decency has not effectively shown itself. With honorable exceptions, the editors, churchmen, the leaders of the South, have done no better than counsel caution and deplore the Northern press. I say with honorable exceptions. Too few have shown the recognition of the demands of the racial crisis that Robert Penn Warren shows.

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described as a handbook for the man of good will. Father LaFarge states the basic moral position on racial relations held by the Catholic Church, and then offers sound advice to the man who wishes—who must—work to apply the principle. The statement of principle should be familiar to any informed Catholic. Whether it is practiced is the question we must ask ourselves. Says Father LaFarge:

> A homogeneous, hand-picked congegration where people are mutually conformable in all their minor social ways is agreeable. It makes parish life smoother. But to require such conformity is entirely un-Catholic; it is contrary not only to the spirit of the Catholic Church in general, but to the tradition of the Catholic Church in the United States. If our ancestors in the past had encountered such an attitude, how few of them would have been able to maintain the faith . . . .The Church has never excluded the poor.

And he adds this essential statement, quoting Monsignor Gladstone Wilson of the British West Indies:

> . . . the cross of Christ has created a new nation of men . . . This new nation, this sturdy race is unique in the history of mankind. It is a race created not by blood, but by grace. . . . Some 15,000,000 American Negroes are seeking their share in these treasures of God's bounty. They know the bitterness of human sacrifices on the demands of human greed and inhuman indifference. They dread a sacrifice that brings death, not life. They know of the divine democracy of Christ. They should belong to the new race. . . . They need the Mass.

Father LaFarge does something which few writers on this subject have done in offering plain advice: what steps to take to improve the racial situation in a community, where to write for advice and help, how to organize if organization is needed, where to find reports on what others have done and on what they have learned. He discusses the accomplishments of such organizations as the Catholic Interracial Council, Friendship House, the Catholic Committee of the South, the NAACP and the Urban League. He even lists and warns against the Communist-front and Communist groups which have been active in this field, and offers calm and charitable advice on how to deal with organizations whose motives may be suspect.

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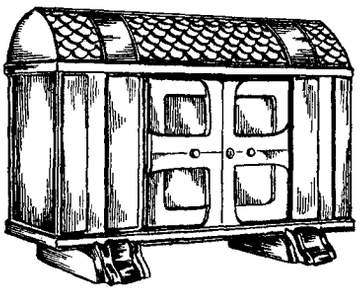

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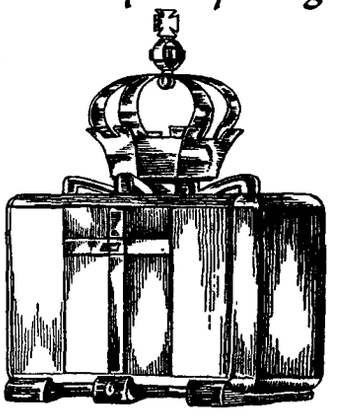

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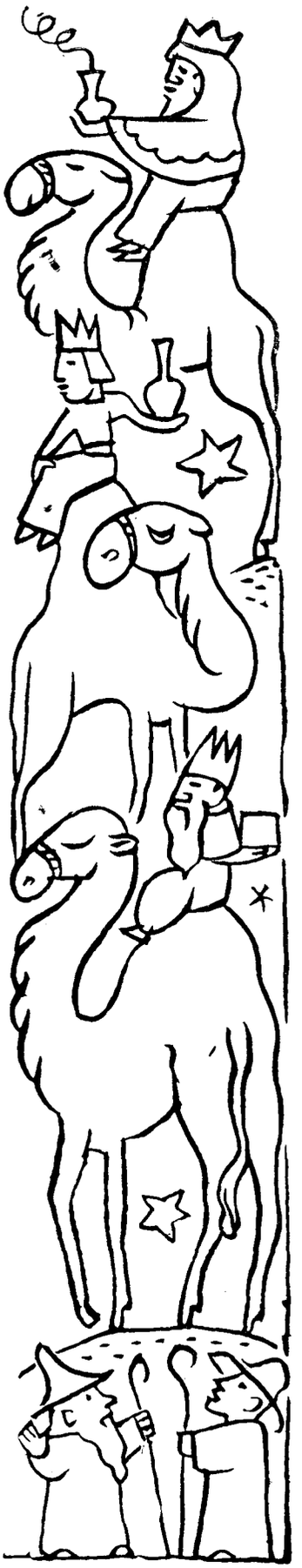

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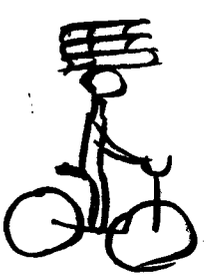

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